

March 11, 2010

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Ron Bianchi and I serve as the Corporate Senior Vice President of St. Vincent's Medical Center. My purpose for contacting you is to ask for your help in turning down the reductions related to hospitals that are proposed in Governor Rell's mitigation plan.

Her proposals to reduce the DHS and Urban pools as well as reduce Medicaid payments flies in the face of the realities which these economic times have brought with them. Many Connecticut residents were working two years ago and now are without income or health care insurance. They have migrated from private care to clinic and emergency department services. Their current form of coverage is dramatically below the cost of the care they receive or they are simply uninsured because they still have assets.

These families did nothing wrong other than to be caught in an economic turndown or in a company that simply had to downsize. When they come to my hospital emergency department they know they are going to get care regardless of their economic hardship, so you can understand why they keep coming back. Our fastest growing population of patients is the uninsured, and we need the partnership of the state to meet their needs.

The partnership we need is one that enables us to serve this growing population by at least not taking resources away when the demands are increasing dramatically. What would the state do if hospitals could not survive in this environment? For certain, people need care and there does not appear to be any support system behind the hospitals of Connecticut. I would think that the state would be better served if the hospitals avoid an economic crisis, so we ask you to please help us avoid payment reductions meant for the poorest patients of our state.

In the Governor's plan she also introduces a bed tax. This tax on hospitals happened once before in our state, and it caused serious difficulties for hospitals and essentially put the hospitals between the state and those purchasing insurance. It did not work then and it will not work now, but it will cause confusion and discord between all parties.

Thank you for considering my request and please vote against these cuts.

Sincerely,


Ronald J. Bianchi